THE NEW
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## NEPAL'S EX-PM OLI ARRESTED OVER 2025 GEN Z PROTEST CRACKDOWN

**Nepal's former Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli was arrested on Saturday over the brutal crackdown of anti-government protests last year**

### START OF JUSTICE, SAYS NEW HOME MINISTER

Oli was arrested at the Gundu area of Bhaktapur district, 12 km east of Kathmandu, early Saturday morning, the police said. "We have taken under control former Prime Minister K P Oli and former Home Minister Ramesh Lekhak. This is not a revenge against anybody, just the beginning of justice," Nepal's Home Minister Sudhan Gurung wrote on social media | P11

### OLI, LEKHAK FACES UP TO 10 YEARS IN JAIL

- A probe panel had recommended legal action against Oli and Lekhak under criminal offence over their involvement in the crackdown
- Nepal's new government, led by Balendra Shah, in its first cabinet meeting on Friday, decided to immediately implement the panel's recommendations, which includes three to ten years of jail sentence

**76**

**PEOPLE KILLED DURING THE CRACKDOWN ON GEN-Z PROTESTS IN SEPTEMBER**

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

EXPRESS READ

### Cong to get temp relief from vacating Delhi HQ

New Delhi: A day before the deadline to vacate its long-time headquarters at 24, Akbar Road, the Congress may receive a last-minute reprieve from its eviction notice, sources said. Sources indicated that the reprieve came after Congress leaders engaged in back-channel discussions with the government, securing a temporary relief | P9

### Army gets 1st batch of 'Make in India' LMGs

Gwalior: In a boost to the Army's firepower, a defence major on Saturday delivered the first batch of 2,000 'Prahar' light machine guns (LMGs) manufactured under the 'Make in India' initiative. The 7.62 mm-calibre weapon has been manufactured by Adani Defence located on the outskirts of Gwalior.

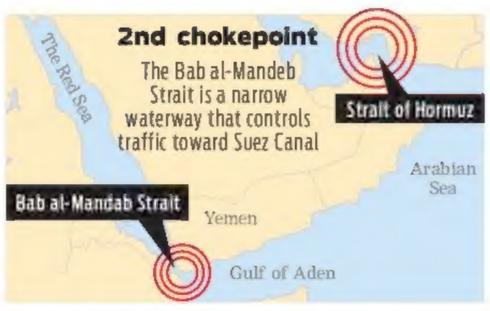
WOMEN

QUOTA RIFT DEEPENS

Amit Shah said the govt aims to implement women's quota for 2029 LS polls by advancing the delimitation exercise, but Cong wants delimitation talks only in May | P9

# Red Sea worry as Houthis join conflict for first time

**Choking Bab el-Mandeb Strait could haemorrhage economy**




AGENCIES @Tehran

YEMEN'S Houthi rebels entered the West Asia war on Saturday by launching a ballistic missile towards Israel, as the world struggled to contain the economic damage of a conflict on verge of entering into its second month.

The intervention of Iran's Yemeni allies into Tehran's conflict with Israel and US raised concerns about disruption to Red Sea shipping, with trade from the Gulf through the Strait of Hormuz already choked off.

With no end to the conflict in sight, despite US President Donald Trump's optimism that US forces have obliterated Iran's military, a spokesman for the Houthis issued a video statement declaring that the group had launched ballistic missiles at Israel.

Israel's military said it had intercepted a missile. During Israel's recent war on Gaza, the Houthis, claiming solidarity with the Palestinians, attacked shipping in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. But, until Saturday, had sat out this conflict. Experts warn that the Iran-backed Houthis have the potential to create a disastrous economic shock around the world.

If the Houthis ramp up their role in this conflict by targeting vessels in the narrow Bab el-Mandeb Strait off the Red Sea, it would not only further push up oil prices but destabilise "all of maritime security," said Ahmed Nagi, a senior Yemen analyst at the International Crisis Group, a research institution. "The impact would not be limited to the energy market." As Iran strangles Hormuz, countries have scrambled for alternative routes. Bab el-Mandeb is particularly crucial as it controls traffic for vessels heading to the Suez Canal through the Red Sea.

DAY 29 — WAR WATCH

**Iran skeptical on talks**

Iran is skeptical about recent diplomatic efforts to stop the war in the Middle East, its Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told his Turkish counterpart in a phone call Saturday | P11

**PM speaks to Saudi Prince**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to Crown Prince and PM of Saudi Arabia, Mohd bin Salman, on the ongoing conflict in West Asia and agreed on the need to ensure freedom of navigation

NOIDA AIRPORT OPENING

# Ethanol blend eased fuel crisis pressure: Modi

S LALITHA @Noida

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the Centre was taking all possible steps to ensure that the ongoing West Asia conflict does not impact the common man.

After unveiling the first phase of the Noida International Airport at Jewar, Modi commended sugarcane farmers for reducing India's dependence on crude oil by helping scale up ethanol production. "Without the increase in ethanol production and its blending with petrol, India would have had to import an additional four-and-a-half crore barrels, approximately 700 crore litres of crude oil annually," he said. "The hard work of our farmers has given the country enormous relief during this time of crisis." Ethanol has not only benefited the country but also the farmers, with approximately ₹1.5 lakh crore worth of foreign exchange being saved, he elaborated.

Stating that he discussed the West Asia crisis in detail in Parliament as also as with all chief ministers the previous day, he appealed to the people to face the situation with a calm mind and remain patient. "What is in the interest of Indians and in the interest of India, that alone is the policy and strategy of the Government of India," he said. He expressed confidence that all political parties would back the country's efforts.

As for the Noida airport, he said it is the symbol of a developed UP as it will connect North India to the entire world. "A plane would take off every two minutes from here in the future," the prime minister said, adding, "the airport will benefit a vast region encompassing Agra, Mathura, Aligarh, Ghaziabad, Meerut, Etawah, Bulandshahr, and Faridabad."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Union Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu and others, during the inauguration of the Noida International Airport, in Jewar on Saturday | PTI

# B'luru college prof booked for calling student terrorist

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

A professor of management and commerce at PES University, Hosakerehalli, has been booked for insulting a student from the minority community by calling him a terrorist. The Girinagar police registered a suo motu FIR against him, even as the university placed him under suspension.

The alleged incident took place on Tuesday and the video of it is doing the rounds on social media. It shows the faculty member, Dr Muralidhar Deshpande, saying, "The moment the class is going on, you come and disturb it. *Sharm nahi aati tumko.* Useless fellow, terrorist. I will call you a terrorist. I thought I will be very calm today. *Kya kha ke aate ho? Sharm nahi aati?* Terrorist."

A video grab of Professor Dr Muralidhar Deshpande talking to the student

Dr Deshpande is an adjunct faculty at the department of Faculty of Management and Commerce. Following the incident, Lakshya Raj V, president, Bengaluru Central District, National Students Union of India (NSUI), filed a complaint with the Girinagar police against Dr Deshpande. Lakshya stated in the complaint, "Dr Muralidhar Deshpande allegedly humiliated a minority student by addressing him as belonging to a terrorist group. This act is highly condemnable and unacceptable. NSUI demands action against Dr Deshpande and a public apology video for his misconduct with the student."

Jawahar Doreswamy, Chancellor, PES University, in an official letter addressed to Dr Deshpande, stated, "A case of student complaint has been received. Pending a detailed enquiry into the matter, you are kept under suspension with immediate effect."

In the meantime, the Girinagar police too registered a suo motu FIR, following a complaint by Head Constable TN Ravi Kumar against Dr Deshpande. CONTINUED ON: P7

**RICHES FOR CITY**

| Corporation | Budget outlay | Tax revenue |
|---|---|---|
| BWCC | ₹4,732.73cr | ₹1,074.80cr |
| BNCC | ₹4,341.20cr | ₹1,112.29cr |
| BECC | ₹3,889.98cr | ₹1,500cr |
| BSCC | ₹3,825.95cr | ₹1,101.30cr |
| BCCC | ₹3,426.55cr | ₹1,406.80cr |
| **Total** | **₹20,216.41cr** | **₹6,195.19cr** |

# Five city corpns together present ₹20Kcr budgets, aim for self-sufficiency

AKNISREE KARTHIK & MOHAMMED YACOOB @Bengaluru

THE maiden 2026-2027 budgets of all the five city corporations under the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) totalled Rs 20,216.41 crore, as against the Rs 19,927.08 crore presented by the erstwhile Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) last year. The increase is around Rs 289.33 crore.

While it was the sixth consecutive budget presented in the absence of an elected council, it is likely that fresh budgets would be presented once elections are held to the five corporations, as per the Supreme Court directions to complete the election process before June 30.

The total tax revenue of all the five corporations amounts to Rs 6,195.19 crore. Amidst concerns that the newly formed corporations might face the same fate as New Delhi, where the split corporations were merged back into one entity following financial constraints, the five city budgets have focused on generating their own revenue to be self-sufficient and rely less on government funds.

Amid the revenue-deficit concerns raised by the State Finance Commission against the Bengaluru West City Corporation (BWCC), it presented the budget with the largest outlay among all corporations at Rs 4,732.73 crore.

It was followed by the Bengaluru North City Corporation (BNCC) with an outlay of Rs 4,341.20 crore, Bengaluru East City Corporation (BECC) with Rs 3889.98 crore, Bengaluru South City Corporation (BSCC) with Rs 3,825.95 crore and Bengaluru Central City Corporation (BCCC) with Rs 3,426.61 crore.

The maiden budgets uniformly allocated Rs 2.25 crore for each of the 369 wards, against the demand of Rs 5 crore placed by city legislators in the pre-budget meetings.

A common thread connecting all the civic bodies is that of Municipal Bonds, with each corporation aiming to mop up Rs 200 crore and, in return, get an incentive of Rs 26 crore each from the Union government. Infrastructure boost was the other common factor in the budget.

FULL COVERAGE: P2

# Scare in air for IndiGo after engine failure

S LALITHA @New Delhi

AN IndiGo flight from Visakhapatnam to New Delhi, carrying 160 passengers, was forced to make a full emergency landing at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport on Saturday after one of its engines failed mid-air.

All passengers and crew were evacuated safely from the Boeing 737 aircraft upon landing.

Flight 6E 579 departed from the Visakhapatnam International Airport at 8.48 am. A full emergency was declared at 10.39 am after one of the engines failed. The pilots requested the Delhi Air Traffic Control for priority landing.

"As soon as the message was received, Runway 28 was allotted for priority landing for the aircraft. Emergency was declared there from 10.45 am to 10.55 am. All necessary protocol was followed with fire and medical teams kept on standby," an airport official said.

The plane landed at 10.54 am, the official said. After evacuation, passengers were assisted by the airline and airport staff, the official added.

An IndiGo spokesperson said, "As a precautionary step and in accordance with the standard operating procedure, the pilots requested for priority landing and the aircraft arrived safely at Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi."

The IndiGo aircraft at the Indira Gandhi International Airport, in New Delhi | PTI

# After VIP passes controversy, 3-4 MLAs turn up for match

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI @Bengaluru

DESPITE receiving two VIP passes each, after a Congress MLA raised the demand triggering a controversy, many legislators did not turn up at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium to watch the IPL opener between Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) and Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) on Saturday.

Hardly three to four MLAs of the total 224 turned up at the stadium. CM Siddaramaiah, who was in Mysuru, said he will not be in Bengaluru to watch the match. "Those who want to go will go, those who don't will not," he said. DCM DK Shivakumar, who had backed the demand for tickets by MLAs saying it was their right and privilege, was busy campaigning in Assam, which is facing the Assembly polls.

Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara, who had attributed the MLAs' demand for VIP tickets to their interest in sports, was in his hometown Tumakuru. Siddaramaiah's close associate and Urban Development Minister Byrathi Suresh, who had taken part in the 'Ganahoma' performed by KSCA to ward off the 'obstacles' before restarting IPL matches, watched the match. P4

# Next-gen homegrown captains in focus as league enters new era

SWAROOP SWAMINATHAN @Bengaluru

WHEN Ishan Kishan was appointed interim captain of the Sunrisers Hyderabad franchise in the lead-up to the 19th edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL), it was a small but significant in the competition's history. It meant captains of all franchises would be Indians, at least to begin the season. Taken in isolation, it may not mean a lot. But pull back the curtains a little bit and analyse it at the macro level. It suggests several things. Mainly, the league, firmly in its adulthood from this year, is willing to experiment in terms of how they appoint captains. Earlier, captains and experience went hand in hand. Captains and the biggest overseas stars of those teams went hand in hand. Not anymore.

Some franchises are beginning to get smarter. It's not a surprise because this is how leagues evolve, mirroring the format's international growth, penchant for data and the need to keep pushing the boundaries wherever possible.

Of course, this doesn't mean any Indian player will be considered for the post of captain but now Indians are more likely to be named as captains when compared to earlier. Then, there used to be a demand in franchise cricket to spend extra for the purpose of picking a captain. Boffins of teams in the bigger leagues have realised that specialist captains, in general, do not contribute extra points in a season.

It's why, over the last few seasons, Shreyas Iyer, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Shubman Gill, Axar Patel and, recently, Rajat Patidar (Royal Challengers Bengaluru( and Kishan were handed the gigs. Outside Gill, none of them were the biggest names of the side when they were given the job for the first time. This is an intriguing development for a league which was infatuated with its biggest stars. But after 19 years, it doesn't need hand-holding anymore.

RCB ace Virat Kohli celebrates his team's victory against SRH at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru on Saturday. RCB chased a challenging target of 202 runs with four overs to spare. Kohli scored 69 off 38 balls | KEVIN NASHON | P13